

Q. Where can I go to have my well tested for contamination?

A. There is a list of certified labs for testing of well water available at the Bernalillo County Office of Environmental Health or you can access the list at:

www.nmenv.state.nm.us/dwb/Certified_labs.html.

Q. Does the state or county provide any financial assistance if I need to change my failed system to a more expensive, alternative one?

A. The County has a program called PIPE that provides financial assistance for moderate and low income households to connect to a sewer system. You can find out more about PIPE by calling (505) 848-1500.



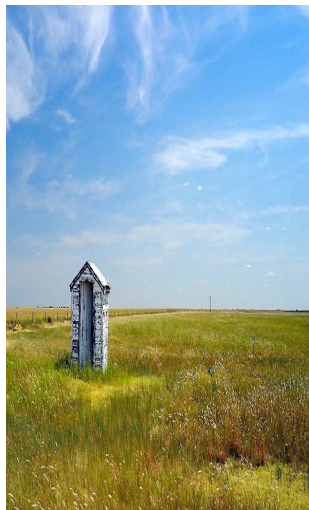
Bernalillo County
Office of
Environmental
Health

111 Union Square SE,
Suite 300
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Phone: 505-314-0310
Fax: 505-314-0470
Email: eh@bernco.gov



Bernalillo
County
Office of
Environmental
Health



What You've
Always Wanted
to Know About
Wastewater,
but were Afraid
to Ask

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Estimated Septic Pumping Frequencies in Years

Tank size in gallons	Number of persons in household						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1000	12 yrs	6 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs	2 yrs	1 yr	1 yr
1200	16 yrs	7 yrs	5 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	2 yrs	2 yrs
1500	19 yrs	9 yrs	6 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	2 yrs
1750	22 yrs	11 yrs	7 yrs	5 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs
2000	25 yrs	12 yrs	8 yrs	6 yrs	4 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs
2250	27 yrs	14 yrs	9 yrs	7 yrs	5 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs
2500	32 yrs	16 yrs	10 yrs	7 yrs	6 yrs	5 yrs	4 yrs

Maintenance Tips

Do

Divert surface runoff water from roofs, patios, driveways and other areas away from your drainfield. Have your septic tank **pumped regularly**.

Have your septic tank **inspected for leaks and cracks**.

Install **effluent filters**.

Spread out your water usage. For example, do not do all of your laundry in one day.

Compost your garbage or put it in the trash.

Use **boiling water or drain snakes** to open clogs.

Call a professional if you have problems.

Keep your septic tank cover **accessible** for tank inspections and maintenance.

Discharge only biodegradable waste.

Don't

Use a **garbage disposal**; these appliances normally double the amount of solids added to the tank.

Flush sanitary napkins, disposable diapers, old medication, or other non-biodegradable products into your system.

Dump solvents, oils, paint thinners, disinfectants, pesticides or poisons down the drain as they can disrupt the treatment process and contaminate the groundwater.

Dig in your drainfield or build anything over it.

Drive over your drainfield or compact the soil in any way.

Plant trees or shrubbery close to the septic system, because the roots can get in the lines and plug them. Grass is

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Do I have a septic tank permit?

A. To determine if you have a permit for your septic system, call the Bernalillo County Office of Environmental Health at (505) 314-0310

Q. What size is my septic tank?

A. To determine the size of your septic tank, have a certified septic tank inspector come out.

Q. What do I have to do to my septic system when I sell my home?

A. You will have to make sure your septic system is functioning properly by contacting a certified septic system evaluator.

Q. Where is my septic tank and disposal field located?

A. A certified septic system evaluator can locate it. Once located, you should make a map of your lot and the location of the septic system.

Q. What is the minimum lot size for a traditional septic system?

A. This is determined by the size of your home. For example, the minimum lot size for a three bedroom house is 0.75 acres.

Q. How do we retrofit our functioning system to comply with the new ordinance?

A. You need to have a certified system evaluator come to your house and determine if a retrofit is required. However, if your system is functioning correctly, you may only

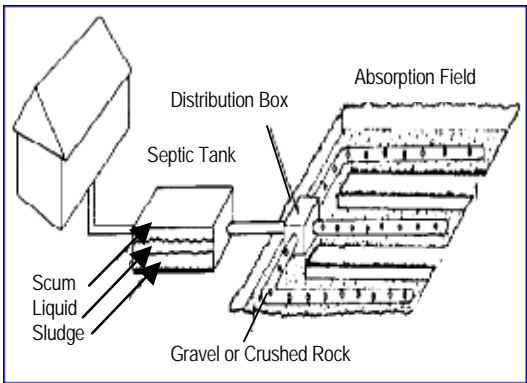
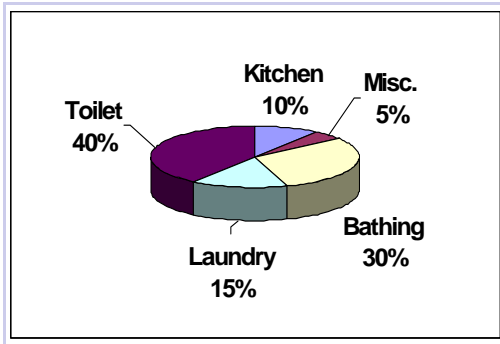


Diagram of a Septic System

need to add an effluent filter (\$100) by 2015 or before, if you sell your home.



Source of Waste

Q. Do septic system maintenance companies have to be licensed by the state? How do I know if they do an adequate job?

A. The septic system maintenance company should be licensed with the state. It is always a good idea to check on references.

Q. When I buy a piece of property how will I know in advance if I will need an alternative system?

A. There will need to be enough space for a proper drainfield. If there is a lot of bedrock on your property, waste absorption may not occur properly. Call the Bernalillo County Office of Environmental

Health, and inform them about your particular piece of property, and they can answer your questions.

Q. How often should I have my tank pumped?

A. Generally, every one to three years. However, please see the table on back of the brochure, that illustrates pumping frequency in years.

Q. Water softener companies tell me that it is not harmful to drain the backwash into my tank, who should I believe, the County or the company?

A. The water softener effluent can kill off the helpful bacteria in your tank. You need this bacteria for your septic system to function properly. You can drain your water softener effluent into the drain field by bypassing the septic tank.